

THE BOOK CLUB OF CALIFORNIA

*Quarterly
News-Letter*

*Working with American Bookbinders & Restorers:
A View from Abroad*

BERNARD C. MIDDLETON

The Nuremberg Chronicle Quincentenary
JOYCE LANCASTER WILSON

Gifts & Acquisitions

Serendipity & Desideratum

Exhibition Notes

Reviews: Encounters with Paradise &

a new directory of the American book trade

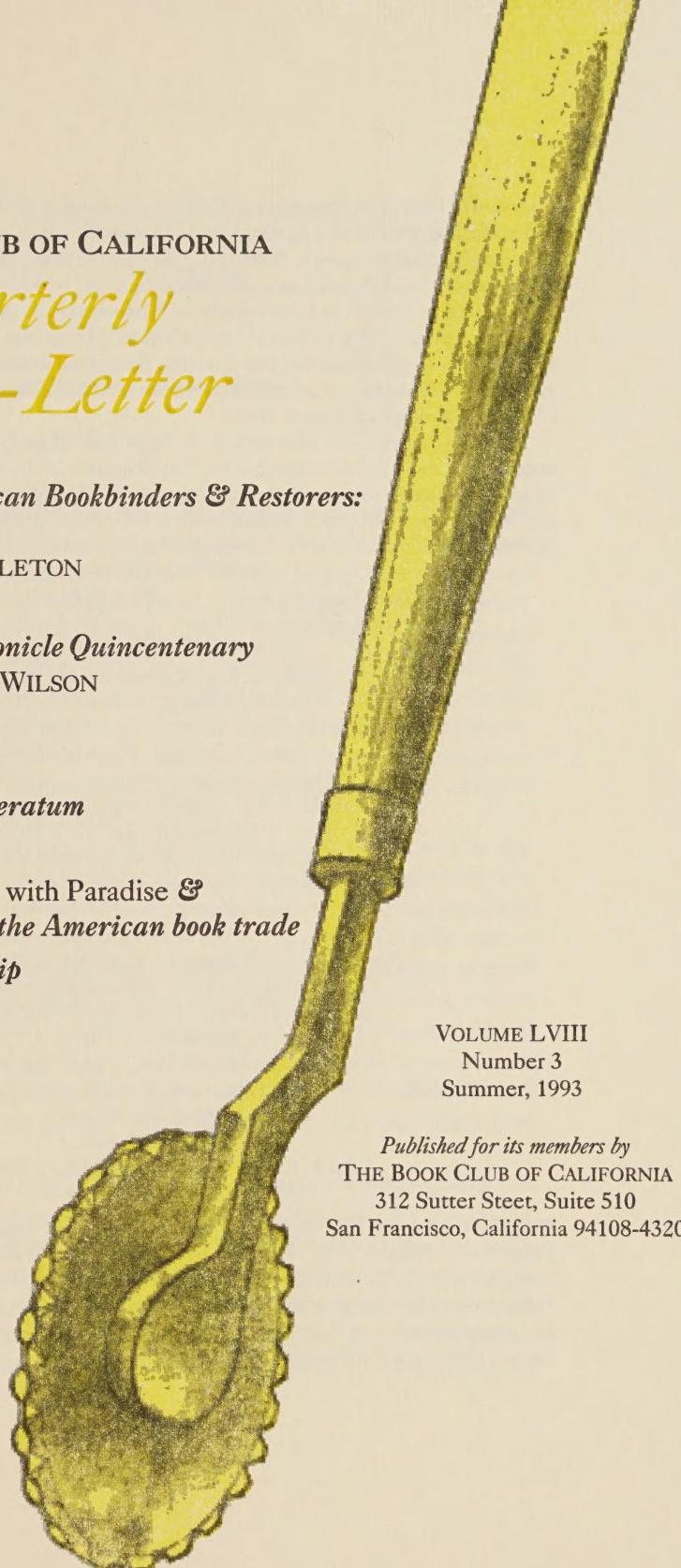
Elected to Membership

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Founded in 1912, The Book Club of California is a non-profit organization of book lovers and collectors who have a special interest in Pacific Coast history, literature, and fine printing. Its chief aims are to further the interests of book collectors and to promote an understanding and appreciation of fine books.

The Club is limited to 1,000 members. When vacancies exist membership is open to all who are in sympathy with its aims and whose applications are approved by the Board of Directors. Regular membership involves no responsibilities beyond payment of the annual dues. Dues date from the month of the member's election. Regular membership is \$55; Sustaining \$75; Patron \$150.

Members receive the *Quarterly News-Letter* and all parts of the current Keepsake series. They have the privilege, but not the obligation, of buying the Club publications, which are limited, as a rule, to one copy per member. Members may purchase extra copies of Keepsakes or *News-Letters*, when available. Membership dues and donations, including books, are deductible in accordance with the Internal Revenue Code.

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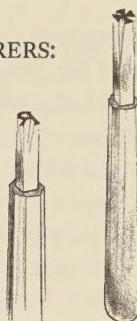
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WORKING WITH AMERICAN BOOKBINDERS AND RESTORERS:

A View from Abroad

BERNARD C. MIDDLETON



During the last seventeen years or so, it has been my pleasure to conduct about thirty workshops in various cities throughout the United States, each lasting three or four days, occasionally five. The average number of participants has been in the region of ten, so I think I have worked with about three hundred American bookbinders and restorers, most of whom were employed full or part-time, some self-employed. The subject of all the workshops was the restoration of leather bindings, which has been my principal professional activity since 1953, when I established my own bindery. I became a student of craft bookbinding in 1938 and have been involved in fine binding since then. In addition to the workshops in the States I have conducted them in Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, and Venezuela.

One of the reasons I enjoy running workshops in the States is the exuberant enthusiasm of the participants, which is of course a characteristic for which Americans are noted, whatever the activity. They are naturally more outgoing than we "Brits," but in some cases the avidity for information and experience arises from the fact that they work in isolation and are starved for the company of people with kindred interests. This is quite a serious problem for the many who are comparatively inexperienced and need on-the-spot advice. Those who are employed in libraries are somewhat better placed, even if they are alone, because leave for attendance at workshops and seminars seems to be fairly generous (a remark which may produce a few hollow laughs).

Isolation in this vast country is but one of many problems facing the craftsman, the lack of adequate basic training being the most serious, in my view. Until fairly recent years there was no formal institutional training at all, just a few courses in private schools in binderies, such as the Capricornus School in Berkeley and the Harcourt Bindery in Boston, which started them in 1974. Now the first two-year program devoted entirely to craft bookbinding has been established at the North Bennet Street School in Boston, among its

other vocational courses such as musical-instrument making. Previously, would-be binders attended private classes, often for only a few hours a week over a period of a few months, or perhaps years, and subsequently signed up for many workshops conducted by experienced specialists, mainly from Europe, or Europeans resident in the States. Unfortunately, many aspiring binders and restorers still tread this difficult path. It is an expensive way to learn, and it can be confusing to be confronted with widely varying attitudes and techniques if the participant has not benefited from a properly structured basic course lasting at least two years with the same team of instructors. Bookbinding and restoration are difficult crafts which involve many operations and subtleties, so it is inevitable that experienced practitioners' techniques will vary, and the more there are the more the novice will be confused.

Isolation is quite a handicap, not only because motivation may flag, but also because, despite the telephone and the fax machine (which few can yet afford), many technical problems are difficult to resolve at a distance. Apart from this, if the best work in one's field is seldom seen, standards may not only fail to rise but may well gradually and unintentionally slip.

Yet another serious handicap for practitioners of a far from lucrative craft, in any country, is low productivity, which is very common among those who have not been trained in trade binderies. In these, there is usually subdivision of labor and much repetitive work which may be boring but can result in a high degree of skill and speed in a narrow range of activities. Many who have not been through this mill are not only slow but painfully slow, so if they are self-employed the work, which is already inherently expensive because it is labor-intensive and involves costly materials, becomes prohibitively expensive, and it may well lack professional finish. Many are unaware that they are slow, but it must be frustrating for those who have seen good work done twice as fast and known that they are incapable of emulating it, not only because of the potential cost-saving, but also because pleasure is to be derived from efficient working methods. Slowness has a number of disadvantages other than the matter of economics and, possibly, boredom; for example, in new binding, the constant patting and working of wet leather and other materials can result in their having a "tired" look. In restoration, excessive pushing and prodding can easily cause old materials to disintegrate. Of course, speed should result from good organization and economy of movement, and not from slapdash methods. All this applies as much to British as to American craftspeople, but the former work in a smaller and more tightly knit "community" and have a greater chance of awareness of what is required.

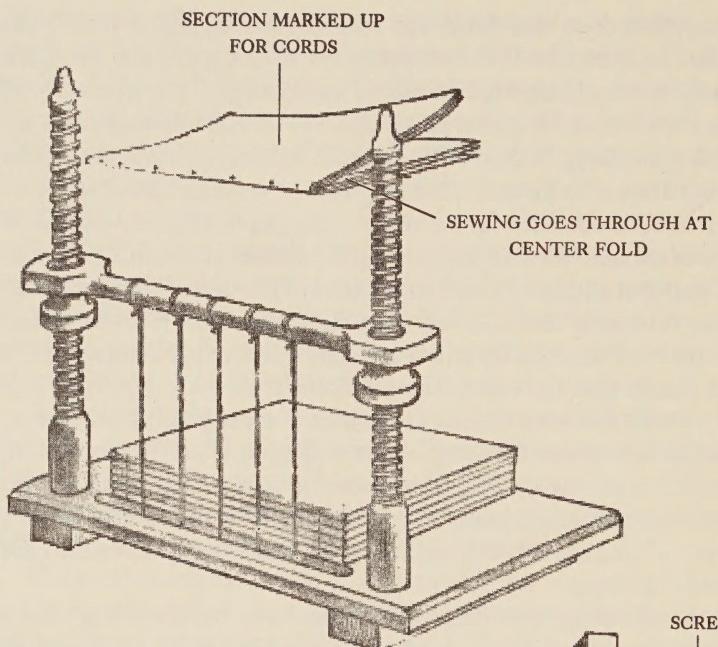
A problem which does face American restorers and repairers more than their European counterparts is the comparative scarcity, outside the great libraries, of pre-1800 books on which they can work and gain experience. One result of this, I have noticed, is that many stand in awe of old books and are nervous of doing anything to them. Of course, one must have respect for the book, but the work has to be tackled in a fairly no-nonsense manner.

Another of life's difficulties for restorers is finding old finishing-tools, of which hundreds are needed if a comprehensive service is to be offered, large stocks of old paper of all periods, and collections of all sorts of odds and ends which eventually come in useful, however unlikely they look. Even in Britain these things are hard to come by and take many years to accumulate. Such supplies are much less necessary for repairers than restorers, but it is restoration, in which the work is done as unobtrusively as possible, that most collectors and dealers want. The majority of institutions prefer repair work which, because it is obvious, is felt to be more honest, though in fact, little restoration is completely undetectable. In the case of new tools and materials, many are imported and are very expensive by the time they have reached the binder's storage shelves.

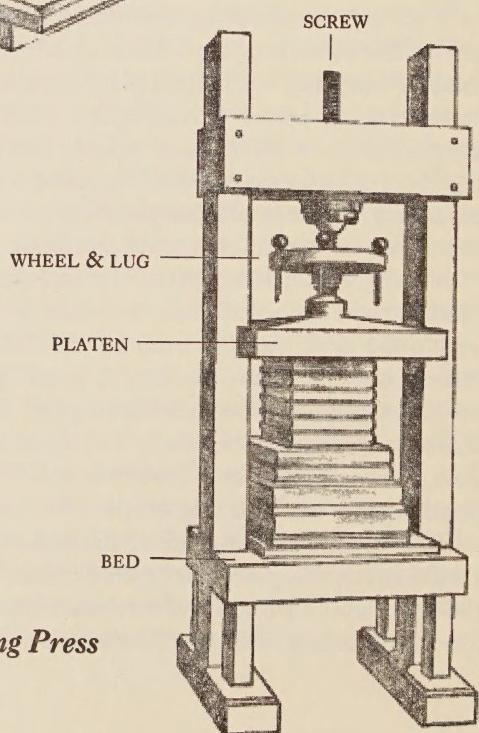
The majority of participants in my workshops have been women, which is fine, but some may experience problems in handling certain antiquarian books. Many, such as natural history books and early atlases, are huge and heavy and present *me* with difficulties, and I am over six feet tall and weigh 210 pounds. It is unfortunate in some cases because women are at least the equals of men in every other aspect of the craft. Here again, this is not a peculiarly American problem, bearing in mind that just as many women seem to be entering the field in other countries.

A trait which, it seems to me, is to be found to a greater degree in American binders than in their British confrères is the urge to be versatile, not just within the craft itself, or even by practicing and experimenting in closely related ones, as many do, but in some cases to engage professionally in activities quite outside bookbinding and book restoration. This is laudable inasmuch as it makes for a more rounded and interesting personality, but it does tend to result in a lower standard of craftsmanship than would be possible with the hard slog of specialization.

The tendency towards diversification of interests may be the outcome of a welcome development since the Second World War, which is an influx into the craft in both Britain and America of more highly educated people, not a few of whom have degrees. The benefit of this has been a more intelligent,



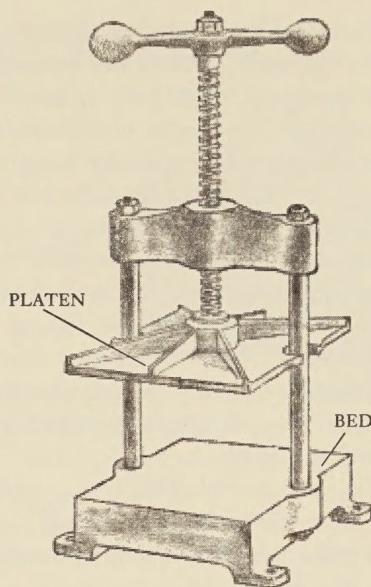
Sewing Frame



Standing Press

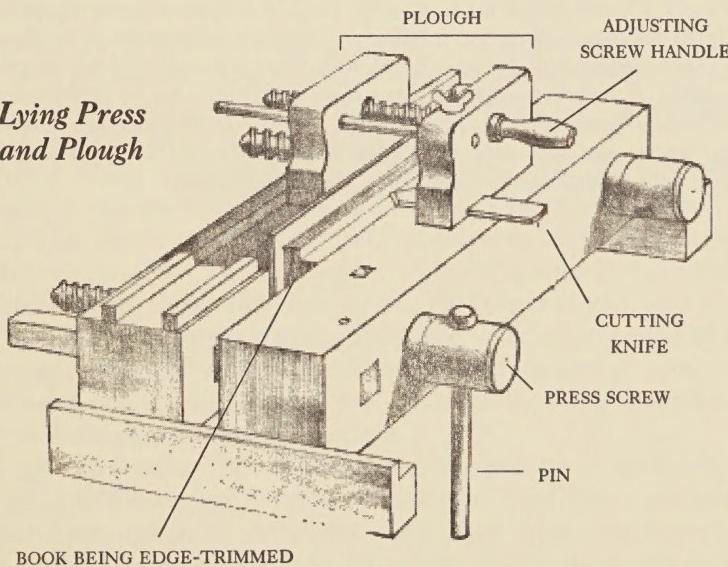
Bookbinding Equipment

From The Restoration of Leather Bindings, by Bernard C. Middleton. Chicago: American Library Association, 1972. Illustrated by Aldren A. Watson. Illustrations on the cover, page 3, and page 22 are also from this volume.



Nipping Press

*Lying Press
and Plough*



BOOK BEING EDGE-TRIMMED

experimental, and analytical approach, and an increased ability to communicate in the many journals and newsletters spawned during the past twenty years or so, and which help isolated binders to feel that they belong to a tangible group of people with kindred interests.

The standards of American design and craftsmanship in fine binding have risen quite dramatically since the late 1970s, which is remarkable considering that collectors who would provide incentives are not exactly thick on the ground, as they say. This improvement is due in part to the publications already mentioned, to the availability of videos, and to the influence of European binders who have visited or settled in the United States. The exhibition of first-class work sent over by societies such as Britain's Designer Bookbinders and by Continental organizations, and also the feedback from American binders who have attended courses in Ascona, Switzerland, have been vital factors.

The present vitality of American work is a heartening development and is a tribute to those who battle against odds which, despite all the aids I have mentioned, are heavier than lay people can appreciate.



BERNARD C. MIDDLETON, M.B.E., F.S.A., was initially trained in craft-bookbinding at the Central School of Arts & Crafts, London, 1938-40, and was subsequently apprenticed to the British Museum Bindery. After a spell as a Craftsman-Demonstrator at the Royal College of Art, and as manager of Zaehnsdorf, Ltd., he became a self-employed book-restorer in 1953. In addition to countless articles, he has written two books—one on bookbinding history, another on the restoration of fine bindings, and is presently writing a book on the appreciation of fine binding and restoration. He is noted in the bookbinding world for being extremely generous with his time and for a delightfully dry sense of humor.

The Nuremberg Chronicle

Quincentenary

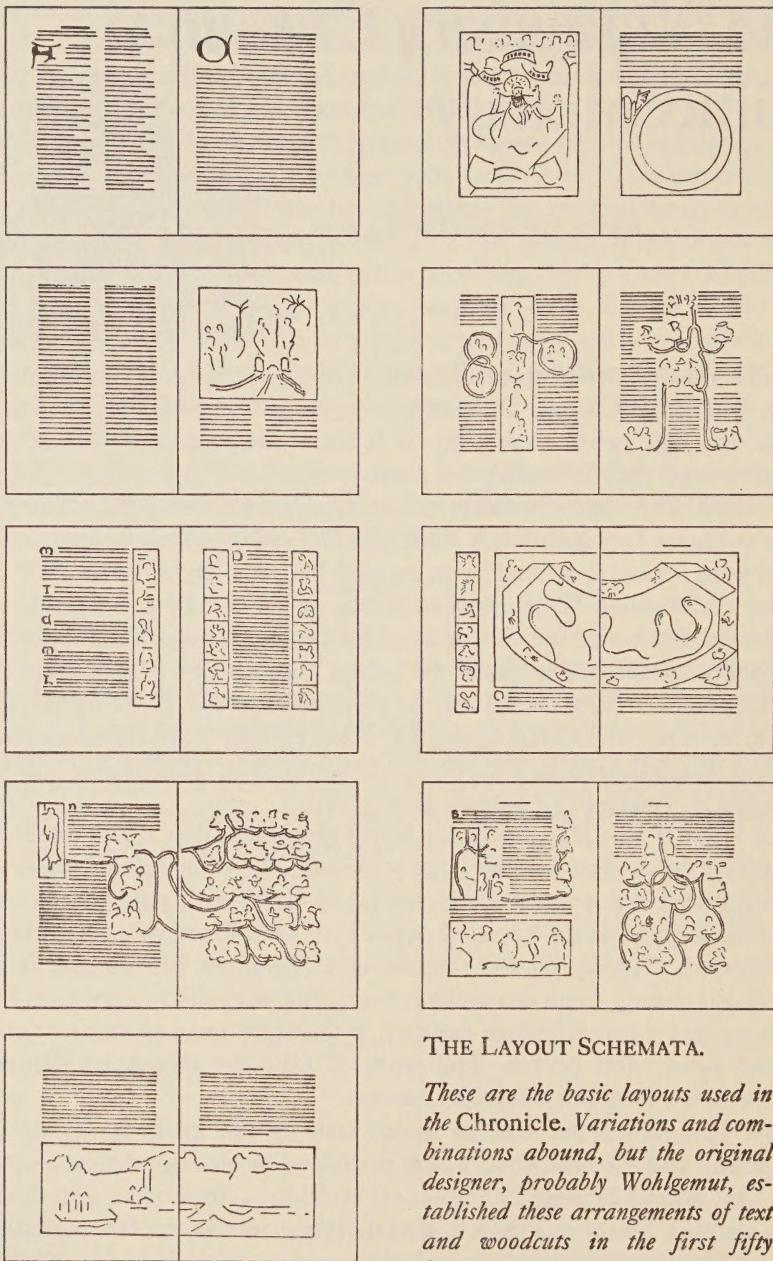
JOYCE LANCASTER WILSON



In addition to celebrating its eightieth birthday (and its two-hundredth book), The Book Club of California has a particular bibliographical reason for celebrating the year 1993. It is the quincentennial year of the publication of the *Nuremberg Chronicle*, and the Club has had several associations with that venerable tome. The Book Club publication for 1930 was Henry Lewis Bullen's work, the first study in English about the *Chronicle*, in a handsome leaf book printed by John Henry Nash. In 1930 another Californian, Ellen Shaffer, wrote an illustrated monograph on the pirated edition of the *Chronicle*, a leaf book published by Dawson's Book Shop and printed by Saul and Lillian Marks at the Plantin Press in Los Angeles. In 1978 *The Making of the Nuremberg Chronicle* by Adrian Wilson, with my assistance, appeared. That edition was printed in Holland and was followed by a second printing in 1978. This year it will be published in Tokyo in a Japanese translation.

And what is this *Weltchronik*, or world chronicle, that was created in Nuremberg in the last Middle Ages and issued in 1493? It is a history of the world from the seven days of creation to the date of publication, in a thick folio volume of six-hundred pages with 1,809 illustrations, provided for different subjects by 645 woodblocks. Woodcut blocks had been printed by rubbing since the ninth century, but with the invention of the printing press in the fifteenth century, xylography entered its most prolific and prosperous period. The work of Albrecht Dürer contributed strongly to the form's widespread success.

That splendid artist was an apprentice in the great workshop of Wohlgemut and Pleydenwurff where the *Chronicle* blocks were produced. From that atelier emerged altarpieces, sculptures, fountains, and devotional plaques. Dürer was then in his late teens, already an accomplished artist, and he would certainly have been assigned to work on some of the



THE LAYOUT SCHEMATA.

These are the basic layouts used in the Chronicle. Variations and combinations abound, but the original designer, probably Wohlgemut, established these arrangements of text and woodcuts in the first fifty leaves.

hundreds of blocks for the *Chronicle*. For centuries, art historians have attempted to assign specific ones to him.

The production team for the vast work were all neighbors and had close ties. Most of them lived on the Bergstrasse which led from St. Sebald's church to the castle. Nearest to the church was the house of Anton Koberger, the printer of the editions, who was Dürer's godfather. Next door lived Sebald Schreyer, one of the patrons who financed the work, and two doors further up was the other patron, Sebastian Kammermaister. His next-door neighbor was Dr. Hartmann Schedel, the author-compiler of the text, and the house beyond was occupied by the Wohlgemut family. Beyond was the house of the navigator and astronomer Dr. Martin Behaim, who created the first territorial globe, and next door was the Dürer house, where Albrecht lived from his fourth to his thirty-fourth year. Koberger's printing workshop was a few streets away on the Aegidienplatz where the present city library is.

There we did most of our research for *The Making of the Nuremberg Chronicle*. We found not only the manuscript layouts, but also, in the archives, records of the contracts executed for the production of the books. It is impossible to be sure, but it seems likely that the printing project was initiated by Wohlgemut. He must have collaborated with his scholarly neighbor Dr. Schedel in the concept of hundreds of illustrations for the *Chronicle* on which Schedel had worked for several years. Wohlgemut then appears to have appealed to Schreyer and Kammermaister to finance it. There is a 1487 agreement between them, the Wohlgemut-Pleydenwurff workshop, and Anton Koberger. This document stipulated the preparation of layout volumes for the printer to follow. They are the earliest known layouts for a printed book. Curiously, there is no contract for Schedel, who was responsible for the whole text, and probably his only compensation was a copy of the book when completed. He had compiled it from the volumes in his great library, and many of his volumes were copied in his own hand. Among these were various earlier world histories from which he borrowed and adapted for his monumental project.

It seems that the number, the size, and the placement of the illustrations were determined between them, and then Schedel, who transcribed most of the Latin text, wrote it to fit the allotted spaces. Koberger then set the type to correspond to the script, line by line. There are two colophons in which Schedel grants himself entire responsibility for the book; neither the artists nor the printer (or a binder) are mentioned.

Presumably the binding was done in the Koberger workshop. There the wooden press had been built, the type cast, and all the presswork done under one roof, unlike our specialization today.

Koberger had the largest printing house in Europe, with twenty-four presses and one hundred workmen. (By two wives he fathered twenty-five children, as though one for each press and one extra.) The German edition incorporated the same 645 woodblocks. The translation was by the city scribe, Georg Alt, and was issued from the Koberger house only six months after the Latin edition. We were able to determine, by the wearing down of the blocks, at what point the printing of the German edition began and also that the printing proceeded concurrently with the Latin.

The contract of 1492 with Koberger required him to supply a locked room in his house for the storage of the blocks to insure that nothing would be stolen or plagiarized. The precaution was well founded, for there was no copyright law, and in fact the *Chronicle* in German was pirated by Schonsperger in 1496 and printed in Augsberg in a smaller format. Nearly all the hundreds of blocks were copied, reduced in size for his edition.

At the time of the production of Schedel's *Chronicle*, Nuremberg was still at the height of its medieval prosperity. The city was among the largest in Europe, with trading connections into Africa through the port of Venice, and a population of 45,000 to 50,000. The most distinguished craft, that of the goldsmiths, was centered there, and all its endeavors prospered under the watchful eyes of the members of the City Council. These were all from the richest and most educated families and took their responsibilities very seriously.

Nuremberg was a walled city, with a castle and two splendid churches. In 1945 during World War II the entire center of the old city was severely damaged by fire-bombing. We found that the manuscript-layout volumes for the *Chronicle*, the contracts, and the other archives had been moved to the vault of a Jewish bank outside the city and had thus survived. After the war the central and oldest part was rebuilt with materials similar to the original and following the old street plan. Even the towers of the fortress wall around the town were restored. The presence of history is strong. It is a beautiful city with a river running through it, spanned by graceful bridges.

When we began our work there in 1970 in the library on the Aegidienplatz, the celebration of the five-hundredth anniversary of the birth of Albrecht

Dürer was in progress. There were huge reproductions of his works in the railroad station and in the streets and parks. The presence of the master's hand in the illustrations for the *Nuremberg Chronicle* was very evident to us. Now we celebrate five hundred years of the endurance of that monumental work and are pleased at the presence of our *The Making of the Nuremberg Chronicle* among the treasures of The Book Club of California.



JOYCE LANCASTER WILSON, *among her many achievements, is co-author of The Making of the Nuremberg Chronicle, author/illustrator of four children's books, a noted actress, and the editor of several works by her late husband, Adrian Wilson, whose Two Against the Tide: A Conscientious Objector in World War II was recently published by W. Thomas Taylor. She is currently editing his numerous letters and journals for publication. She remains the proprietress of The Press in Tuscany Alley, San Francisco.*

NOTE: *Illustrations for this article are taken from The Nuremberg Chronicle, A Facsimile of Hartmann Schedel's Buch der Chroniken. New York: Landmark Press, n.d. Layouts on page 10 from The Making of The Nuremberg Chronicle, by Adrian Wilson and Joyce Lancaster Wilson. Amsterdam: Nico Israel, 1976.*





THE BOOK CLUB OF CALIFORNIA ANNOUNCES

The *Oscar Lewis* Western History and Fine Printing Award

Our Purpose

To recognize special contributions by individuals in the field of Western history or in fine printing, either published or unpublished.

The Award

The award shall be made annually to one or more persons nominated by a member of The Book Club of California and approved by its Board of Directors. Up to \$5,000 annually may be awarded to an individual or divided among chosen nominees. There shall be no carryover from year to year, and the total award may be less than \$5,000.

Nominations

Nominations shall be in the form of a letter addressed to the Board of Directors setting forth the qualifications of the nominee in either or both of the categories listed, namely, Western history or fine printing.

In 1992 the first award was made to William Everson in recognition of his large body of work in fine printing.

Closing Date

Nominations must be received at The Book Club offices before the first of October each year. The award shall be announced no later than the following February.

Members of the Oscar Lewis Award Committee

Harold Wollenberg, Jennifer Larson, John Borden
Paul Birkel, & Harry Goff, President



Gifts & Acquisitions

The most interesting of our recent acquisitions is a book we should have had in 1971, when it was first printed. Fortunately, we have been able to find an immaculate copy with a pristine dust wrapper. The happy find is titled *The Book That Never Was* by Joseph R. Dunlap. This is the story of how William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones made repeated attempts to illustrate and to experiment with wood-cut blocks for Morris's *The Earthly Paradise* and eventually abandoned the project for two basic reasons. First, they were frustrated by being unable to find an engraver who could properly interpret the pencil drawings of Burne-Jones; six or seven would-be woodcutters tried, including Morris himself. Second, after several attempts to relate the virile black woodcuts with all then-known printing types, they found none which fit properly or had the vigor of the planned cuts. While Morris was experimenting with type and cuts, Burne-Jones was busy trying to illustrate *Cupid & Psyche*, for which some fifty cuts were made by various hands and put away until 1974, when Douglas Cleverdon of Clover Hill Press announced the final printing from these long-lost engravings (forty-four now) by Will and Sebastian Carter at their Rampant Lions Press, with a casting from Morris's Tory typeface from the original matrices.

The Club does not own a copy of this "100 years after" Morris item, but we do have a few printed pages from the book that Sebastian Carter gave us after a talk on the book at the Club.

Again, as usual, Toni Savage, some six thousand miles from 312 Sutter Street, has sent us a small addition to his incomparable "Phoenix Broad-sheets," now up to number 380 "and still counting." Thanks again to Toni.

From printer-member Patrick Reagh (via Glen Dawson), we have received another "first" in miniature book production. This one (as usual) designed on a Macintosh IIci computer by Scott Freutel with Aldus Pagemaker using Monotype's digital version of Baskerville type. After corrections, pages were imposed to print 24-page signatures. Then all this was copied on a floppy disk and sent to a computer service bureau where the contents were output on a Linotronic 300 in the form of a film negative (still with us?). From the negatives, photopolymer letterpress plates were created for the Nyloprint plate processor. These were attached magnetically to the bed of the press for letterpress printing as usual. Patrick says that he is reasonably sure that this is the first time a miniature book was produced by this means—so there! The "wee book" cover reads: LXXX/G**D, and the title page reads: *Glen Dawson/A Bookman Turns/80/Thomas F. Andrews/June 1992*. Copies may be had, for

\$15.00 plus tax, from the Historical Society of Southern California, 200 East Avenue 43, Los Angeles, CA 90031.

We have just received from Japan a printed essay from our only Japanese member, Kenichi Arima. This 8 1/4" x 11 3/4" article is an off-print from the research journal of the Musashino Art College, No. 22 (1991), pages 211 to 218. The title, with four lines of Japanese in broken horizontal lines, ends with (in English) "Frank Norris's *The Pit*/Kenichi Arima." On the first page the author comments in English that he "attempts to analyze the way Norris deals with the subjective aspects of Laura's way of life, her feminine libido, the changes of her concept of beauty brought about by her lover Corthell...." He adds, "One sees Norris's experience from his own past projected in *The Pit*, set in Chicago: his bohemian friends at the turn of the century, and *Les Jeunes*...in his portrayal of Laura and Corthell...." Arima illustrates his article with a reproduction of a *Lark* poster, a cover of *The Lark*, No. 11, 1896, and an amazing drawing by Norris entitled "U.C. Orchestra." This is indeed an item that will join our Frank Norris collection, for the Club continues to be the arbiter of the Norris writings. Our sincere thanks to our member from Japan.

We have just acquired the "last word" on one of America's great book printers: *The Merrymount Press/A Centenary Keepsake*, by Daniel Berkeley Updike, the last survivor of the Press. Much of the material is "new" to collectors, but much more is shown for the first time. This book was printed by the Stinehour Press in a 7" x 9" format and bound in full linen stamped in gold. Each copy is numbered and signed by the author; of two hundred copies printed, 185 are for sale.

Becky Fischbach and her "Quark XPress" have again produced an uncommon printed booklet by her "uncommon" printing method. This is another catalog designed and produced for Stanford University's recent exhibition, *Moderns/The Annette Campbell-White Collection*, at the Cecil H. Green Library January 24 through April 7, 1993. Becky's computer production is a "must" for any would-be worker in this field, but it must be noted that not everyone can accomplish what she does, even with the proper equipment. One must have a solid background in design and *real* letterpress printing to make it all work.

Eight hundred copies of the catalog were produced, but only one hundred will have a striking cover printed in horizontal and vertical stripes in three colors on a brown Gainsborough cover stock—a very modern conceit for this modern exhibition. Here, Becky has used the same device as in her last catalog for the Berger-Morris show: a wraparound of this twenty-page booklet

in a green Ingres paper. The Club is delighted to shelve this with her last work as an outstanding example of an exhibit catalog.

The Club has acquired two items that belong in our regular collection. The first is a copy of *A. Carlisle & Co., The First Hundred Years* (1952). This belongs with our oral histories on lithography, joining H.S. Crocker and Schmidt. The Carlisle book contains a chapter on their beginnings as Britton & Rey, 1852, with original printed items as inserts and original color layouts for this work by Van Allen Haven, with yours truly as an associate art director and production manager. The second item is a "plug" for Strathmore Paper, announcing two of their papers for books, with reproductions from books by A. A. Kittredge (who owned this item), Helen Gentry, a former San Francisco printer, and the Merrymount Press. This booklet belongs with our collection on paper.

Our Executive Secretary, Ann Whipple, has given the Club a fine copy of our Oscar Lewis's *I Remember Christine*, signed by Oscar on the half-title. For unknown reasons, the Club never owned a copy—but stranger things happened during the war years, especially 1942. Our sincere thanks to Ann. This copy will be shelved with our collection of Book Club authors.

Barbara Land has presented the library with a copy of *Early Printers' Marks*, a copy of the "Small Picture Book No. 56" of the Victoria and Albert Museum (1962). This supplements our copies of *Fifty Printers' Marks* by Edwin Elliott Willoughby, U.C. Press, 1947, and *Printers' Marks and Devices*, the Caxton Club, 1976. Our thanks to dear Barbara.

From our librarian, we have received a book that for some reason we never had: *W. W. Robinson, A Biography and a Bibliography*, by Jimmie Hicks, with a Foreword by Lawrence Clark Powell, Zamorano Club, Los Angeles. Eight hundred twenty-five copies were printed by the Ward Ritchie Press, including two hundred specially printed for distribution to the members of the Zamorano Club and The Roxburghe Club on the occasion of their joint meeting in Los Angeles, September 26-27, 1970.

It is odd that a copy of this book did not find a home at The Book Club before now—particularly since W. W. Robinson was at one time a director of The Club! This copy will be shelved with other works of our member-writers.

ALBERT SPERISEN

The Book Club has just purchased a most remarkable book, *The Janus Press 1981-1990, Catalogue Raisonné* by Ruth E. Fine. It is published by the University of Vermont Libraries and is available at \$20 from The Ashley Book Company, Box 534, Burlington, VT 05402. The 48-page work is printed in full

color and is based on an exhibit of the amazing work of Claire Van Vliet. Her books are a combination of paper works in color, text, and binding, and the catalog shows that work over the last ten years. The Club is very fortunate to have this example of her work.

From Club members Mr. and Mrs. Herman Cohen we have received the gift of a copy of their latest work. This is *The Book of Jonah*, designed and illustrated by Ismar David, the noted calligrapher and designer, in a bilingual text. Perusing the book, one feels as if one were on the journey with Jonah. The text provides an excellent illustration of the calligraphic conventions of both Hebrew and English. There is a lively introduction by Chaim Potok. The book is a delight to see and to read, and we thank the Cohens for their generosity.

From Mr. Harry Goff, our President, The Book Club has received *The Smithsonian Book of Books* by Michael Olmert. This stunning new volume is a montage of manuscript and printed images, together with a multitude of pictures from many institutions and times, all in full color. This book was created with one of the newer Linotronic 1-300 adaptations of Monotype Bembo using a PostScript language imagesetter and various computer programs for image placing. The book is available at \$40 from The Smithsonian Bookshop or from local booksellers.

We thank Mr. Goff again for this superb survey of bookmaking.

The Club has just received, from member Albert Sperisen, Wissa Weiss's *Historische Wasserzeichen*, Leipzig, Bibliographisches Institut, 1986. This work illustrates sixty-four watermarks, explains who the makers were, and when the paper was made. Thank you, Albert.

BARBARA LAND

Barbara Jane Land

CATALOGING OF
BOOKS, RECORDS & MANUSCRIPTS FOR
INSURANCE, PERSONAL, OR BOOKSELLING PURPOSES.
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Serendipity

During my several years as editor of *QN-L*, no issue has received more plaudits or encomia than our most recent Spring 1993 issue, designed and printed by Susan Acker and Mary McDermott at the Feathered Serpent Press in San Raphael. Most often mentioned are the cover layout of seventeen *QN-L* printers' pressmarks from over the years, the cover layout key on the verso, and Adela Roatcap's moving account of *William Everson at The Book Club*. So it is a special pleasure to open an envelope bearing this recent letter from Susan and Mary, reading, in part, as follows:

"We are very pleased to be the first *QN-L* printers to print the issues letterpress from computer type. The Book Club's decision to take this step encourages fine printing in California and advances the study of letters and the promotion of arts pertaining to the production of books. In our judgment, it is a landmark in the Club's proud history. The *QN-L* printing contract enabled us to justify the purchase of a polymer platemaker for the production of letterpress plates. Its importance to our growth as book artists is inestimable. The processes we used to print the Spring cover and the photograph of William Everson have led us to exciting new experiments with our own personal work, in which we are combining our skills in printing, computer work, photography, and etching. ss/Susan & Mary"

Readers of *QN-L* are hereby invited to comment further and, in any event, will be treated to an illustrated article on the process in a future issue.

Associations redux: Veteran Book Club member Alan Dietch's copy of *A Typographical Masterpiece* by John Dreyfus (Book Club, 1990) recently achieved a unique state. Alan's copy was inscribed by Dreyfus upon publication and then most recently by Roderic Stinehour, the printer of the work—this on a visit to Alan's home (and veritable museum of printing memorabilia and printing history) in Foster City. Stinehour Press is printer-of-choice to The Grolier Club, The Morgan Library, New York Public Library, Dartmouth College, and Harvard University, among others. The Dietch/Stinehour friendship dates back to September, 1956, and, on one occasion in Rochester, New York, in 1970, Stinehour remarked upon entering Alan's office, "When you walk in here you know you're someplace." Stinehour's son Christopher, the prominent stone-letter cutter of Berkeley, accompanied his dad on this recent visit.

With *QN-L*'s publication of Bernard Middleton's article in this issue, it is serendipitous indeed to be able to announce here that Designer Bookbinders will be holding their first international conference for ten years at Christ

Church, Oxford, from August 31 through September 3. The conference will provide a forum for discussion and display for craftspersons, teachers, technicians, and students on the latest developments in fine binding. Speakers will include Fellows of Designer Bookbinders and internationally acknowledged experts, with workshops covering many aspects of design, structure, and decoration of the book and conservation, preservation, and restoration developments. A trade fair will be mounted in association with the conference. Contact Peter Tuke in the U.K. (fax 0730 825763) or write him at Millstream Europe Ltd., South Harting, Petersfield, Hampshire GU31 5LF, United Kingdom.

A welcome note from member John O'Brien of Aukland, New Zealand, reads, in part: "I compliment the designer and printer of your Winter 1992 *QNL* (Vol. LVIII, Number 1) received today. The title page is quite superb and I will be passing it on to other enthusiasts here to spur us on the greater things. Mail from the Club is always exciting." Thank you very much indeed, John O'Brien, and thank you again, Feathered Serpent Press, for such fine work.

If you missed *Making Book the Hard Way* in the March 29 *Newsweek* you may wish to pay a visit to your local library to check the article which covers the "prestigious Grolier Club" recent exhibition, "The American Livre de Peintre," in which Andrew Hoyem's Arion Press receives special presentation. And how does Arion Press continue to receive such accolades? Perhaps it's for doing things like this: A recent Arion Press letter to its subscribers begins (in 14-point sans serif) "THIS IS NOT A DETROIT RECALL. It's a chance to upgrade an Arion Press book in your collection." Arion Press proprietor Hoyem goes on to write that "I was never satisfied with the binding material [for *A Moral Fable-Talk* by Arthur Golding] so we have designed a new binding using goatskin for the spine and corners and cloth for the boards, with gold stamping for the titling and ornaments...for \$45...I believe you will appreciate this more handsome and substantial binding." Done, by this subscriber, and I am delighted with the outcome. Do fine presses care about the quality of their work? They do.

Finally, and because I appreciate such thoughtfulness in their notices, I mention the publication of Ecco Edition's *Dante's Inferno: Translations by Twenty Contemporary Poets* (Seamus Heaney, Amy Clampitt, Richard Wilbur among them) in an edition of 125 numbered copies signed by all twenty of the poets. \$1,250, prospectus available from The Ecco Press, 100 West Broad Street, Hopewell NJ 08525. The other "thoughtfulness" is the latest in the list of stunning rare book catalogs issued by Ursus Books, 981 Madison Avenue, Mezzanine of the Carlyle Hotel, New York NY 10021. The title is *Art &*

Connoisseurship, Catalogue Number 170, to benefit The Frick Collection, 754 entries in all. This magnificent catalog is one of the few to be granted a full New York Times Art review, this by Hilton Kramer on February 1, 1993. I understand a few copies are available at a token sum. Inquire.

HARLAN KESSEL

Our congratulations to member and fine printer Jack Stauffacher, who will travel to Verona, Italy, for a two-week session at which he will be honored for his book, *Odes HORACE*. Jack is writing a book about Porter Garnett, the great San Francisco printer, teacher, and founder of the Laboratory Press in Pittsburgh; the Club plans to publish Jack's work this year.

ALBERT SPERISEN

Desideratum

Does anyone have a sturdy easel to donate to the Club? The Exhibits Committee would be very grateful to have one for displaying large, heavy items. Please communicate with the Executive Secretary if you can help.

Exhibition Notes

Two quite different types of books and book-related graphic materials were exhibited at the Club during the first months of 1993. From January 11 to February 19, member George Robert Kane shared with us the work of his students at the University of California, Santa Cruz—a group of quite elegant and professional posters, prints, handbills, small books, and graphic ephemera. All the graphic work presented was done by first-quarter students during the nine weeks of the course. According to Kane, the subjects of these posters and the enlarged title pages of printed books were chosen by the students themselves. He heartily discourages co-operative projects in his class, saying that "the brunt of the class is to develop the student's individual sense of design, color, illustration, and meaning—not the instructor's."

From February 22 to April 2, the Club displayed an extraordinary group of printed books dealing with mineralogy and gemology, accompanied by related artifacts and samples of associated minerals, comprising only a small part of the collection in the fields of science and geology belonging to members Wayne and Dona Leicht of Laguna Beach.

The Leichts, who attended the opening of the exhibit, pointed out the importance of these books to the understanding of the history of science. For instance, the first English translation of Nicholas Steno, his *Prodromus* (preliminary publication or introduction), printed by F. Winter, London,

1671, and included in the exhibit, was the first book to deal with two of the very important discoveries by Danish author/scientist Nicholas Stensen, or "Steno," as he called himself. While studying quartz, Steno discovered one of the fundamental laws of crystallography: "The Law of Consistency of Interfacial Angles." He was also the first to expound, in writing, on the principle of superposition: That sedimentary rocks originally laid down horizontally would have younger rocks lying on top of older ones, now known as the theory of sedimentation of the earth. In a completely different vein, the Leichts' collection included one of the loveliest books this writer has ever seen—a Japanese folded book depicting rare minerals and semi-precious stones, delicately hand-colored with pigments ground from the very stones depicted.

Among the most impressive and rarest of the books in this exhibition was a handsome leather-bound folio copy of one of the first technological books of modern times as well as the first systematic treatise on mining and metallurgy, the work of the German Georg Bauer, who Latinized his name to Georgius Agricola. His *De Re Metallica* was printed in Basel by J. Froben & N. Episcopus in 1556. This book, No. 79 in *Printing and the Mind of Man*, embraces everything connected with the mining industry and the metallurgical processes, administrations, prospecting, and even the manufacture of glass, sulphur, and alum—a strategic material during the Renaissance because it had been imported from Turkey, the land of the infidel, and was essential in Christian Europe for the dying of cloth. The 273 large woodcut illustrations by Hans Rudolf Manuel Deutsch are a veritable manual on the practical aspects of mining. *De Re Metallica* was translated into every language, including Chinese. The famous English translation made by Herbert Hoover and Lou Henry Hoover in 1912 was of course included in this exhibition—an autographed copy.

For those Book Club members who still believe in the occult power of gems—and who doesn't?—Thomas Nicolas's *A Lapidary or the History of Precious Stones* should be required reading. This is the first book printed in English on the subject of precious stones. It is derived from Anselm de Boodt's "Gemmarum et Lapidum Historica" and was printed in 1652 by Thomas Buck, printer to Cambridge University. The author debunks the power of gems to interfere in human affairs. Yet, among the Medici treasures there is a gold-banded, covered cup made of amethyst. Lorenzo de' Medici, who studied Greek with Marsilio Ficino, the founder of Florence's Neo-Platonic Academy, knew that "amethystos" has the power expressed by the Greek word: *a*, "not," plus *methyein*, "to be drunk." How else may one

confidently spend an evening among friends hosting a symposium in honor of Plato and still relish one's fill of those sun-filled Tuscan wines? For those who doubt the power of gems, here are some words traded by Emperor Charles V and his jester: "What is the property of the turquoise?" asked the king. "Why," replied the jester, "if you should happen to fall from the highest tower whilst you were wearing a turquoise ring on your little finger, the turquoise would remain unbroken, sire!" Fascinating books, these.

ADELA SPINDLER ROATCAP

50 X 25

FIFTY RARACH PRESS BOOKS BOUND BY TWENTY-FIVE AMERICAN BOOKBINDERS

*A Private Preview of the Exhibition
from the California Binders in the Exhibition*

The Book Club of California
San Francisco
3 and 4 May 1993



The Bridwell Library Exhibition

The Bridwell Library in Dallas will exhibit fine hand bookbindings of contemporary artists books from the Rarach Press from 11 September 1993 to 22 January 1994. In 1992 the Bridwell Library asked twenty-five binders from the United States to take part in this exhibition. Each binder agreed to bind two copies of the same book, provided by the Rarach Press. After the exhibition, the Bridwell will keep one binding for its collection, and the other will become the property of the binder. Seven different texts are included; the choice of text to be sent to each binder was random. Three of the bookbinders invited to take part in this exhibition are from California. Two of them have the same text.

The Book Club Exhibition

A member of The Book Club of California expressed his disappointment that "our" bindings would not be seen here. Only one of the pair from each binder will be returned, and a limited number of people will be going to Texas for the exhibition. He asked if we could find a way to show the bindings here before sending them to the Bridwell. The Board of The Book Club graciously agreed to hold this mini-exhibition. Dr. Adela Roatcap, whose own exhibi-

tion of artists books at The Book Club opened the first two days of our exhibition, has welcomed the additional material with her usual generous enthusiasm. We appreciate the help and support of the Board and Dr. Roatcap.

The Bookbindings

The "texts" for the books, created by Ladislav R. Hanka, are graphic rather than typographic. Images, not words, make up the lines of poetry. Images stylized from plants form the text of *Agricultural Notations*. The etchings in *Scripta Naturae* (with its Latin title page) and *Leaves of Organic Verse* (with its title page in English) are of plant forms, from grasses to trees. Man-made objects, in the form of buildings, are visible only in negative space. Other than the language of their title pages, these larger books are identical.

Connie Hunter from Santa Cruz received *Agricultural Notations*. One of her binding designs emphasizes the nature of planting corn, the other, the corn itself. Her design statement for the first is as follows: The design represents "a field of corn with seeds being scattered. Seeds turn into gold as they hit the earth, then swirl around and turn into palladium as they go back up into the sky." For the second, she uses recessed panels on the front and back with blue leather onlays and wood veneer cut in the shape of corn to show the corn field at maturity. Both bindings are in full leather, of French tight-back construction, with the top edge gilt.

Both Eleanore Edwards Ramsey, from San Francisco, and Joanne Sonnichsen, from Menlo Park, received *Scriptura Naturae* (with its Latin title page) and *Leaves of Organic Verse* (with its title page in English.)

Eleanore Edwards Ramsey took the opportunity to experiment with a self-supporting book structure, which permits the viewer a choice of "reading" the book in the usual manner or seeing the etchings displayed almost vertically. Parts of the book boards were cut out and then hinged to allow them to open and to hold the book in a standing position. These supports return to sit flush into the book covers, and they are held in position by magnets that are not visible. The forms of the supports were chosen to suggest the organic nature of the text, and to complement the negative spaces of the roof shapes in the etchings. The book is covered in full dark green French Cape morocco, with a magnetic closure at the fore-edge. It has decorated papers by Claude Delpierre. The binding of the second copy of the book, not yet completed, is similar to the one on display.

Joanne Sonnichsen has bound *Scriptura Naturae* with a traditional French laced-in structure. Her design statement notes: "The unexpected form of the poems is the inspiration for the design. Instead of lines of words, we find lines

of delicately etched images. As we will be drawn into the intricacies of the etchings, so are we drawn into the intricacies of the manipulated folds." The full-leather *chagrin* covering has sheepskin panels which carry the decoration. Heavy sewing threads form the "lines," and the binder manipulates the leather into free-form designs. Two gold-tooled arcs on the front panel and one on the back help the eye enter these manipulated forms. The paste-paper end leaves, made by the binder, further carry the image of the etching plate with its lines of graphic poetry.

For *Leaves of Organic Verse* she has chosen a contemporary variation of the Coptic binding structure. Her design statement notes: "The feeling of openness and of movement in the images inspired this design. Cellophane slivers sewn into the end panels of the acrylic move freely as the book is handled. Their pattern comes from the same patterns as the poetry on the pages, with eight lines on the front cover and four lines on the back." The Coptic sewing and board attachment are visible through the transparent acrylic. The text is sewn with concertina guards. Tim Barrett made the paper for these guards and for the end sheets. A double fold of acrylic, with the first fold at the spine, replaces the wood that would ordinarily be used. The acrylic permits the path of the thread through the "wood" to be seen. The third and fourth folds of the acrylic form the spine, and the covering finishes in mirror image.

The Bridwell is planning a catalog of the exhibition. For further information about either the catalog or the exhibition itself, please contact Roberta Cox, Coordinator of Public Programs, Bridwell Library, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas 75275-0476.

JOANNE SONNICHSEN

Book Reviews

ENCOUNTERS WITH PARADISE. BY DAVID W. FORBES. University of Hawaii Press, 1992. 286 pp; \$48 cloth; \$29.95 paper. (Order from the Press, 2840 Kolowalu Street, Honolulu, Hawaii 96822.)

In a note to this reviewer, the dean of Hawaiian historians, A. Grove Day, characterized this new title by The Book Club's David Forbes as "magnificent...a masterpiece, presenting the fine arts from Webber onwards." (John Webber was Captain Cook's artist.) I agree completely with Professor Day.

This is an excellent compilation, in very readable text with superb pictures, of views of Hawaii by artists from the time of Cook to FDR's "Day of Infamy" in 1941. As such, it is a splendid shelf-mate for The Book Club's

own recent volume by Forbes, *A Pictorial Tour of Hawaii*. (The latter book's content, design, and execution were outstanding, even in terms of the Club's tradition of fine printing of important texts. Members who neglected to secure a copy of *A Pictorial Tour* are urged to do so before it goes out of print.)

Encounters with Paradise is a joint venture of the Honolulu Academy of Arts and the University of Hawaii Press. It grew out of an exhibition for which David Forbes was guest curator, but it is much more than an exhibition catalog. The volume is a full survey of the best iconography of the Islands. There are thirty-six black and white illustrations besides a selection of 160 color plates to enhance the text, and they are all very well reproduced on high-quality coated stock.

Forbes is no doddering oldster, by any means, but he has, already, put a quarter-century of research into this area of study. He places individual artists in the context of Island history, then explores their particular experiences and insights in a brief text followed by a selection of their images. Although certain themes overlap their time-periods and, indeed, some have persisted to this day, the story is divided into four (rather arbitrary) stages: Discovery; later visitors and early resident artists; the so-called Volcano School; and modern painters.

Captain Cook's classically trained John Webber helped foster the image of Hawaii as a Pacific Eden, the myth that has fascinated Europe and the U.S. ever since his day (1778-79). Explorers after Cook were not so fortunate in the talent of their artists until the Britons Robert Dampier and Richard B. Beechey came along in 1825-26, followed in 1841 by the U.S. Exploring Expedition's Titian R. Peale and Alfred Agate.

The sweeping landscape and formal compositions of aboriginal society of the scientific or documentary drawings and paintings of early expeditions gave way in the 1820s to smaller-scale scenes and more intimate portraits, often of commoners as well as chiefs. But the romantic-picturesque tradition continued through the fine work of American John Mix Stanley, famed for his Indians of the West, and Britisher James Gay Sawkins, the subject of Forbes's earlier book. The old mythology also influenced the Volcano School (1880-90). Perhaps the equivalent of California's Yosemite School and New York's earlier Hudson River School, it is sometimes called Hawaii's Renaissance, and Charles Furneaux, Joseph Strong, and Jules Tavernier its Old Masters. Their canvases, of course, were not limited to volcanic views, although Tavernier, especially, was obsessed by Pele's fiery Kilauea.

Californians may be in for a surprise in regard to the artistic ties between the Golden State and the Paradise of the Pacific. From San Francisco came

Joe Strong and his wife Isobel (Belle), step-daughter of Robert Louis Stevenson; also Tavernier. Ukiah contributed Grace Carpenter Hudson (famed for her Pomo ethnographic portraits), and Sausalito its great marine artist, William A. Coulter. The first of the moderns, on the very heels of the "Volcanists," was another California-Hawaii painter, Theodore Wores. His "Lei Maker" is a sort of charming "Mona Lisa" of Hawaii. From the Southwest came Joseph Strong of Taos and Georgia O'Keeffe of Abiquiu, New Mexico.

The major modernists, however, whatever their birthplace, are essentially all-Hawaiian: D. Howard Hitchcock, Madge Tennant, and Lloyd Sexton.

Californians may again be surprised at the high caliber of this little-known (until now) art of Hawaii, demonstrated for us so skillfully by David Forbes.

Most highly recommended.

RICHARD H. DILLON

Book buyers take note: The first edition of the largest-ever directory of the American book trade now provides ready access by store name, subject, and bookseller to 3,000 out-of-print and specialist book dealers throughout the United States. *Antiquarian, Specialty, and Used Book Dealers: A Subject Guide and Directory*, compiled by James and Karen Ethridge (Detroit: Omnigraphics, 1993; \$48) includes the expected directory information, arranged geographically by state and city, supplemented by unusually detailed listings of subject specialties and features such as appraisal and search services, catalog frequency, membership in trade associations, and year established. Spot checking of the entries for California booksellers reveals a very high degree of accuracy, although users should be aware that the information is only accurate as of the summer of 1992. Also, comprehensive as this handsome new directory is, several interesting booksellers, some with shops and some without, have managed, perhaps deliberately, to slip through the cracks.

JENNIFER LARSON

Elected to Membership

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